

# **Somerville Commission for Women Meeting**

June 2, 2021

7:00pm

Go To Meeting

**Present:**

**Crystal Turner  
Stephanie Galaitsi  
Deborah Lormeus  
Fabia Oliveira**

**Guests:**

**Fernando Cervantes  
Derrick Rice**

**Staff Members in Attendance: Jennifer Mancia**

**Meeting Called to Order:**

Crystal Turner called meeting to order 7:07 Deborah seconded

Crystal - Denise sent a letter just before the meeting.

Stephanie - interested in the job description. The role in Cambridge does a lot of work on behalf of women not just coordinating volunteers. As a Commissioner would love to have the support which needs a dedicated staff person. Maybe they will and maybe this is a simple misunderstanding. Would like to see it more clearly stated.

Crystal- to follow the mandate that is an Executive level position. We are not going to vote to change the ordinance to weaken the mandate. We are not a committee we are a commission. Don't pretend like you are supporting when you are not. The Commission is designed to deal with many different issues. Even they mention that there is a proclamation to advance. Need funding to do outreach and other tasks. We may have time to influence or maybe they don't care. There are so many aspects that require coordination. There aren't a long term solution, that is why you need an Executive Director.

Deborah – Were we going to be informed? I'm trying to understand role as a commissioner and not having the opportunity to speak with the RSJ.

Crystal- told Denise that we needed to have conversation. We can still influence, but we have a short time. Doesn't matter which department, what matters is that we need an Executive level position.

Stephanie – think that going from 0 to 40 hours a week might be a harder ask. Willing to entertain sharing a person. We can argue about the title, but think this is a starting point.

Crystal – that's not what the ordinance or the consultant told them to do. Sounds like they are still working out a plan. Feel like there is still an opening and think that there is a better solution. The employee from Cambridge would be more than happy to come. Maybe there are people from the community like RESPOND who can come. Maybe CAAS and Teen Empowerment. Fundraising, coordinating and collaborating. If they are not interested in an ED why put the proclamation out. Unless they are looking at hiring a Women's Office.

Deborah – I want to hear others.

Fabia – Think Crystal is right. Sounds like a conversation that was had without us. If there is still time and space we should have the woman from Cambridge come and speak. Even if it's just for a 20-25 hour position.

Crystal – Started thinking through strategy.

Stephanie – think it might be easier to start at 20 hours a week from somebody. It's not just the time, but it's the expertise. It might be good to have a year at 20 hours. In the event it goes well, we are taking this ask to a different person who may be more amendable.

Crystal – I think we should push it now. Can share and ED, but the coordinator needs to be a specialist. The person has to have a background in advancing women's issues not just anyone. It's not acceptable. My suggestion would be to go ahead and put the ED in. The charter review committee is also looking at funding. Between now and June our focus should be current Mayor. Between now and November our focus should be on the Council. Right now relying on the Commissioners to do everything is not working, because we don't have expertise.

Stephanie – Where are we in the budget process?

Crystal – First draft being presented tomorrow. Next Thursday public hearing and not finalized until the end of the month. They might be open to hearing us. Our focus should be on influencing the Mayor.

Stephanie- There is an ADA coordinator, does that mean that that Commission is getting their own person? That is interesting. Can we talk to Denise about it?

Crystal – Going to respond to that email. It will be helpful to respond. Don't think the structure is the most efficient. Here is what we think is a better solution. Still having the forum on the 15<sup>th</sup> and bring in people who can explain why this is important. Should still publicize it and ask him questions. They're still not going to change the ordinance. You are not going to tell us what to do. We still want to present a better solution. Are you going to bring us into compliance? Are we going to get a budget? How does the city plan to prioritize intersectional support for women especially in relation to COVID 19? How are we going to be in compliance with the ordinance? We have the ability to question the administration. I'm not trying to reprimand, but he should be prepared to answer that. Present why an ED is a necessary solution. Propose: That we respond with a group email thanking for response but also make a note that we are not in compliance. Will attend public hearing next Thursday. It would be good if we could show up as a group. Third thing should be the forum. They were concerned that it could be too busy. We need to get our views in front of them.

Stephanie - second motion. Fabia and Deborah in favor.

Crystal – content thought about a way to show we are serious. But maybe decommission would be extreme. We have to show that we are not going to change what the ordinance says.

Deborah- like proposal of righting an email that they are not in compliance. It would be important to reiterate. Attend Wednesday for public comment at 6pm.

<https://www.somervillema.gov/events/2021/06/09/city-council-fy22-budget-hearing>

Crystal – Still have the meeting on the 15<sup>th</sup>. What is the consequence if he decides not to comply with the ordinance? Been out of compliance for a while?

Deborah – What is we recommend that if it stays in compliance maybe we can work with the proposed the solutions.

Crystal – They need to start out in compliance.

Deborah – We are up against time and this could fall by the wayside. We should have some recommendations under the stipulation that we come into compliance.

Crystal – Bottom line is we need a Director.

Deborah – We need to build a partnership.

Crystal – they don't have it planned out yet. There is wiggle room. We have to go for solutions in such a short time frame.

Fabia – Do we know how much has been budgeted? It would be telling.

Crystal – more interested in having a director.

Deborah – I'm in full support but need to leave the meeting.

Crystal – will put together an email draft. Question for the forumn who do we want to invite and can Fernando provide insight into advertising.

Fernando – can't be of much assistance, because the story won't be published until next week.

Crystal – can someone attend the meeting on the 15<sup>th</sup>?

Fernando – yes

Crystal – can we see the article before hand?

Fernando – no, but I will mention the forum. Send information to reference in the article.

Crystal – who can we invite? I can invite the Cambridge staff, community partners, Chris Hosman, former Commissioners, can send out to email list. Was there anything else to discuss? Will send potential solutions to sign off. Fabia will help with edits and will go from there. Will send out more information about next Wednesday.

Fabia – thank you for spearheading this and making this commission what it is set out to be. Should be respected and valued.

Crystal – still have time to influence. Motion to adjourn. Fabia second 8:11pm.